

BLUMENTHAL APPLAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF BUILD BACK BETTER BUDGET RESOLUTION

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BUILD BACK BETTER BUDGET RESOLUTION

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] - U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) released the following statement today after the Senate approved a budget resolution that will allow Congress to move ahead with a \$3.5 trillion generational investment in our nation's future and support American families, workers, and seniors:

"This budget resolution puts the needs of the American people first," Blumenthal said. "I am eager to work with my colleagues as we finalize this proposal for a vote in the fall - cutting costs of prescription drugs, expanding job training, making free dental, vision, and hearing care available to all seniors, fighting climate change, reducing taxes, and making corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share."

In remarks Blumenthal made on the Senate Floor in support of the measure earlier this week, he spoke about the importance of lowering the cost of prescription drugs so American families and seniors, "don't have to make these choices that we describe day after day, between paying the mortgage and putting food on the table and clothing our kids." Under the budget resolution, Medicare coverage would be expanded to include dental, vision, and hearing.

Blumenthal also highlighted the budget's effort to establish universal pre-K and the positive impact it would have on both parents and children. "Child care is critical not only to those jobs and the people who fill jobs, but also to the emotional and educational development of children, allowing moms and dads and grandparents to go back to work but also to allow children to have the basics in preparation for education, the support they need."

Blumenthal concluded by discussing the need for investing in more than physical infrastructure and the importance of focusing on improving the lives of the American people. "But on every one of those transportation byways, there are people who depend on them, people who are going to work or visit their family. Those people are at the end of the day what this infrastructure serves, and the freight that will be on railroads or the goods and produce transported on our highways go to people. They serve our economy. They create jobs. We need to do much more for those people."

The video of Blumenthal's remarks is available at [and](#) the full transcript is copied below.

The Build Back Better proposal that will soon be coming before the Senate is literally a milestone for this country. The bipartisan infrastructure proposal that we will shortly pass is transformative for our nation and for Connecticut. It will enable us to do long overdue work on our roads and bridges, our railroads, and broadband, on the physical assets that are essential to this country, creating jobs and remaining competitive around the globe. This work has

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been too long delayed, and I will be proud to support it. I thank all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle that have contributed so critically to making this vote possible.

Final passage of a measure that will enable the bridge across the Connecticut River to be truly safe and reliable. The Mixmaster in Waterbury so-called because it mixes several roads at once, to be finally done. A proposal that will enable, we hope eventually, the tracks between New Haven and New York to be really reliable, to be maintained properly.

But on every one of those transportation byways, there are people who depend on them, people who are going to work or visit their family. Those people are at the end of the day what this infrastructure serves, and the freight that will be on railroads or the goods and produce transported on our highways go to people. They serve our economy. They create jobs.

We need to do much more for those people. Just today in The New York Times in the business section, there is an article about a young mother who wants to go back to work, reenter the full time work force, but she has two children. One is awaiting the beginning of school and the other she feels needs and deserves day care before she can go back to work. That road that enables her to drive or the railroad to commute won't be a link to the workplace for her until she has day care.

Our economy is interconnected in ways that we understand intuitively when we look at individual people, but too often we have mounds of paper no longer for all of us truly paper, but mounds of print and numbers and statistics. The real story is in that young mother whose account is so important to us, the human story.

So universal day care, paid family leave, affordable medical care and housing, they are also the stuff of human needs. They're part of our human assets. Seniors need dental care and eyeglasses and hearing aids so that they can appreciate all of the benefits that we're trying to bring them through this infrastructure program.

The American people need jobs so that they can afford prescription drugs, and the cost of prescription drugs need to be lower so they don't have to make these choices that we describe day after day between paying the mortgage and putting food on the table and clothing our kids.

The pandemic has affected health, food, shelter, financial and overall security of families across the country. It has taken a toll on small businesses. They, too, need help. The Restaurant Revitalization program should be replenished, and small businesses given a lifeline that they need because they have been so direly injured and threatened. We need to build back America. And the assets, the roads and bridges, but also the systems that serve Americans and we need to build it back better.

So I am proud to support this budget resolution that will make investments for working families, the elderly, our environment. Over the past year I have spoken to countless families who need that child care and providers who furnish it across the northeast. Child care is critical not only to those jobs and the people who fill jobs, but also to the emotional and educational development of children, allowing moms and dads and grandparents to go back to work but also to allow children to have the basics in preparation for education, the support they need.

By establishing a universal Pre-K system and providing families with incentives like the child care tax cuts to help them afford care, we can ensure that children are prepared for success and parents can go to work.

But it isn't enough to ensure that families can just afford child care. We have to ensure they are able to live healthy lives. And we know health care is complicated, it's confusing, it's expensive, especially for our aging seniors and people with disabilities and our fellow Americans with preexisting conditions.

Over this past year, we learned clearly and dramatically how resource-deprived our health care system has become - individuals forced to make choices between keeping a roof over their head or going to the doctor or paying for medications. No American family should be forced to make those choices and we need to invest. It's not about spending, it's investing in our health care system. This budget proposal will accomplish exactly that goal. Lower

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prescription drug costs, lowering those burdens, providing broader access to medical providers, including that dental care, hearing aids, and vision for individuals -- all individuals on Medicare, should be our paramount goal.

And it's critical that home health care workers and patients understand their value. Individuals with disabilities were left struggling to find affordable home and community-based services throughout the pandemic. We need to appreciate the home care worker and pay them adequately just as we need to pay that home care for seniors who need it.

Health care is more than access to care. It is the basic system that provides that access. And there should be no delay when we're talking about the air we breathe and the water we drink because those assets also are essential to health care. Rail will be supported -- better railroads, tracks, cars by this proposal that we are passing today or tomorrow. But there is more that needs to be done to ensure that high-speed rail. Right now the link between New Haven and New York is slower than it was fifty years ago. We need to make sure that it is quicker, not just more reliable but faster and more reliable and safer.

Too often the impacts of unsafe air and unhealthy drinking water fall on minority and low-income communities. They have disproportionately faced adverse impacts from public and environmental health threats and the American people are counting on our leadership to authorize funding for programs that support clean energy resources. Climate change is an enemy that we must conquer just as we are working to conquer the pandemic.

In the Senate, I've worked with the administration to meet the goal of conserving 30 percent of our country's lands and 30 percent of our waters within the next decade. That goal is ambitious, but it's a vital effort that takes an important step toward reducing environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all.

This proposal is comprehensive and that is exactly what is needed now, a comprehensive support - comprehensive program that deserves our support and our leadership. We must invest in our country's leadership by putting the American people and what they need, child care, healthy homes and environments, put it first. I'm proud to support this proposal and I look forward to advancing it on the Senate Floor. Thank you, madam president. And I yield the floor.

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